Children's Employment in Fireworks Industry

2121. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the State in which maximum number of crackers and other fireworks items are manufactured;

(b) number of licensed and unlicensed factories working and for how many months in a year.

(c) number of times checking is carried out to see whether children are employed in this most hazardous business;

(d) number of prosecutions launched for employing child Labour; and

(e) the punishment given by courts in such prosecutions generally?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) Tamil Nadu has the largest number of fireworks manufacturing units.

(b) Presently there are 440 factories licensed for manufacture of fireworks by the Department of Explosives. Manufac ture of fireworks is licensable under the Explosives Rules, 1983 administered by the Department of Explosives. 394 fac tories are located in Tamil Nadu. These factories operate throughout the yea: ex cept for a break after Diwali for a period extending from 7 days to one month. The factories situated in other states operate periodically according to the demand dur ing festivals or crlie/ occasions. District authorities have the powers to license small manufacturing units as per the Ex plosives Rules. Manufacture of fireworks in unlicensed factories is unauthorised and illegal.

(c) Employment of children below the age of 14 in hazardous occupations (in cluding the firework industries) is prohi bited under the Child Labour (Prohibi tion & Regulation) Act, 1986. Depart ment of Explosives conducts atleast one inspection of each of the factories during the year. The inspection is carried out with a view to ensuring observation of safety norms prescribed in the rules including employment of children. The State Administration also inspects these factories for checking the employment of children.

(d) According to the information received so far, 223 and 321 prosecutions were launched under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 and the Factories Act, 1948 respectively in the country during 1995-96, for employing child labour.

(e) The courts generally give such punishment as are specified in the relavant Acts under which the employers are prosecuted.

Shifting headquarters of Coal India Limited from Calcutta to Bihar

2122. SHRI PARAG CHALIAH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided in principle, to shift the headquarters of Coal India Limited from Calcutta to Bihar; and

(b) if so, the circumstances which prompted the Government to do so?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH)- (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of the answer to part (a)

'Increasing import of Coal

2123. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA:
DR. SHRIKANT RAM-CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of COAI be pleased to state:

(a) what are the total coa deposits in India upto a depth of 1200 meters;

(b) when we have such huge deposits, is it proper to spend scarce foreign ex-

hange on the import of coal;

(c) whether due to the recent policies of the department the import of coal has increased; and

(d) what steps will be taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) As on 1.1.1996, the coal resosurces of India (down to a depth of 1200 metres) have been assessed by Geological Survey of India (GSI) at 201.95 billion tonnes.

(b) and (c) Indigenous production of coal is, by and large, adequate to meet the domestic coal demand, except for the steel plants which are main importers of low ash coking coal for the purpose of blending with indigenous coking coal for meeting the gap between the indigenous availability and the demand and also to improve the quality of overall blend to be used in steel plants

(d) Major steps taken to augment indigenous availability of coking coal, inter alia, include:—

(i) Increasing raw coking coal availability by reorganising existing mines and development of new mines.

(ii) Modification of the existing coking coal washeries to improve the capacity utilisation as well as the quality of washed coking coal.

(iii) Increasing raw coal feed to washeries by supplying low volatile 'medium coking coals of suitable quality.

(iv) Early commissioning of two new washers under construction at Madhuband (Bharat Coking Coal Limited) and Kedla (Central Coalfields Limited) for increasing washing capacity.

(v) Effective and better coordination between Coal India Limited and the steel plants is being done through regular review meetings at various levels.

Impact of Increase in price of coal on prices of consumer goods

2124. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether recently announced price increase in coal would lead to a general rise in prices of consumer goods;

(b) if so, whether any study has been conducted to evaluate this adverse impact;

(c) if so, with what results; and

(d) details of measures visualised to check such price increases in the coal so that its impact on general rise in prices of other commodities is checked?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The recent increase in price of deregulated varieties of coal will have marginal impact on the price of consumer goods. The effect on Wholesale Price Index on account of recent increase in coal price is estimated to be about 0.28% only.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above.

(d) Increase in price of coal are necessitated by the increases in the various input costs as well as wage increases etc. The increase in price of the above nature is beyond the control of the coal industry. To some extent, however, the effect of the increase in input cost can be offset by increasing productivity. Coal industry are continuing to take steps to increase productivity and are focussing on better capacity utilisation of heavy earth moving machinery and increase in output per manshift.

Production of Aluminium and other metals at Bidhannagar Unit

2125. SHRI MD. SALIM:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state: